



Ceramic dance figures of about 1840 by a Jewish artists from Poland. The type of clothes and manner of dance would indicate that these are Misnagdim (Those resisting Hassidism). (Courtesy Jewish Museum, New York).

THE DEBKAS

When the first Jewish pioneers (Khalutsim) first reached Palestine toward the end of the last century, and since many of them came from the Horo dancing Romania, they brought with them the horo (Horra) which became so integral part of Jewish Palestine that it was taken for granted of its being purely Jewish. From Palestine the Horra spread to other parts of the Jewish settled communities throughout the world. After some years they began to notice the Arab circle dances, the Debkas, and for a while the Debka form of dance became popular and many dances were created on the Debka style. Now, it is the Yemenite form of dance that practically dominates Israeli choreographies. Here we describe three traditional Debkas.

CIRCLE DEBKA

This circle debka is the first Arabic debka the Palestinian "Khalutsim" (pioneers) adopted, decades before the birth of Israel.

RECORD: Folkraft 1127.

FORMATION: A circle, all facing center. Each places his hand on his neighbors' adjacent shoulders.

Meas. 1: Hop on L foot, place R heel forward on floor (1), repeat (2).

Meas. 2: Hop on R foot, place L heel forward (1), repeat (2).

Meas. 3: Step L foot to L (1), R foot behind L (2).

Meas. 4: Hop on both feet slightly forward toward center of circle or, do a debka bend with both knees toward the left (1), hop on both feet back to place or, a debka bend with both knees toward right (2).

Meas. 5-8: Repeat all.

DEBKA RAFIAKH

Arabic

Debkas, like Kolos, are open circle dances. The characteristic movement of this dance is the constant flexible bounce (not as vibrative as in kolos or East European polkas) of up-and-down movement, and occasionally guttural grunt. Increase tempo with each repeat. Because this dance is a bit too Arabic, tho attempted it never took

root among the Israelis.

FORMATION: Inside hands joined and the left hand is behind each dancer holding the neighbors' right hand. The leader is at the right end of the circle. Face center.

INTRODUCTORY FIGURE: This figure is done only at the beginning of the dance. During later repeats this part is replaced with the shoulder movement (see Fig. 4).

Meas. 1: R heel forward (1), R foot near L (2).

Meas. 2: Repeat that again (1, 2).

Meas. 3: Turn counter-clockwise, step forward on L foot (1), step R forward and turn to face center (2).

Meas. 4: Rise on ball of feet and sink (1), repeat (2).

Repeat all of above once again.

FIGURE 2.

Meas. 5: With a very slight turn toward left, stamp R heel in front of L (1) and bring it right back to R side, turning ccw (2).

Meas. 6: Step L forward and turn to face center (1), rise on ball of feet and sink down (2).

All of the above is done five more times in all (Meas. 7-10 and repeat 5-10).

Please remember to bounce elastically on all above steps.

FIGURE 3

Meas. 11: Move straight forward (center of circle). Stamp R foot front, bending body and bring R elbow in the fore (hands still joined) (1), bring R foot to place (2).

Meas. 12: Stamp L foot forward and bring L elbow to the fore. Body still somewhat bent (1), bring L foot back to place (2).

Meas. 13-14: Repeat Meas. 11-12.

Meas. 15: Hop on L and at the same time extend R heel forward (1), repeat with L heel forward (2).

Meas. 16: Rise on ball of feet and sink on heels.

FIGURE 4

Meas. 1: All face center, head is turned to right in profile; step R to right (1), step L near R (and), step R to right (2), step L near R (and) with each step raise and lower right shoulder (4 times each measure).

Meas. 2-4: Continue moving in the same direction, but with each new measure turn head, next to left, sharp profile, then again, right and once more left.

For the balance of the dance the same figures and steps are used with each repeat, except that tempo increases.

REGULAR DEBKA

RECORD. Folk Dancer 1053.

FORMATION: All join hands in a broken circle, like a kolo.

FIGURE 1: Run to right with R foot (1), run to right with L foot (2), hit R heel against floor (3), hop on L foot still off the floor (4). Do this seven more times.

FIGURE 2: Run to the right with four steps (1 measure). Do four Debka bends—feet together, knees slightly bent, turn knees and feet toward left with a very slight hop of feet, reverse same movement to right, and repeat. This is a stationary step (1 measure). Repeat this entire pattern once more. Four measures in all.

Now do only two runs and two debka bends per measure, four measures in all.

FIGURE 3: Face center, Step R foot to right (1), step L foot behind R (2), step R foot to right (3), hop on R (4), step on L in place (1), hop on L (2), step on R in front of L and at the same time lift L foot off the floor (3), step on L in place (4). This consumes two measures, of eight counts. Repeat this three more times.

FIGURE 4: This is practically the same as above except for the very last two counts when the R foot stomps its heel in place, and is followed up with a hop in place on

L foot (3, 4, or 7, 8). Four times in all.

FIGURE 5: Step on R foot in place (1), swing L foot forward (2), step on L foot (3), swing R foot forward (4), hop on L foot rightward and at the same time click R heel against L (1), repeat click (2), do Debka stomp—hit floor with R heel (3), hop on L foot (4). Do this figure three more times.

FIGURE 6: Face a counter-clockwise direction. Run two steps to right R, L (1, 2), hop on L foot and at the same time kick R foot forward (3), hop again on L foot and at the same time bend R foot at knee across left shin (4), run forward two steps R, L, (1, 2), squat down on ball of feet spreading knees (3), rise on ball of feet (4), repeat all of above three more times.

Michael Herman's record for this dance, which is well done, has 13 repeats. In that case the dance could be done twice through and either use the very first entire refrain for an introduction to the dance or, if exists are needed then utilize the 13th repeat by either repeating the 6th figure once again (the last time only) or reverting to figure one for an exist. The whole dance should have a running and bouncy feel.

JEWISH RECIPES

GEFILTE FISCH (STUFFED FISH)

3 lbs fish (pike and white fish or pike and carp)
 ½ cup water (approximately)
 2 tbsp. fine bread crumbs or Matso flour
 1 stalk celery 1 tbsp. salt
 2 onions dash of pepper
 1 carrot 1 potato (optional)
 1 egg

Clean and wash the fish thoroughly, salt and place in refrigerator until ready to prepare. Cut fish into two-inch slices. Remove the flesh leaving the skin intact. Clear the flesh from the bones. Put the fish and one onion through the food chopper and then into a wooden bowl. Add the egg, bread crumbs, seasoning and enough water to make a soft light mixture. Chop until smooth and thoroughly blended. Fill the skin with this mixture. Place the bones on the bottom of a heavy kettle. Slice the other onion, the carrot, the potato and celery, place them on the bones and season them all with a dash of salt, pepper and cinnamon. On these place the fish and cover with cold water. Cook rapidly at first, then slowly for about two hours. If the sauce has boiled down completely, add a little water. Allow fish to cool somewhat before removing from the kettle. Serve warm or cold.

Horseradish relish is an indispensable accessory to gefilte fish. Scrape and grate a horseradish root. Mix a little vinegar and sugar to taste and color with a little beet juice.

EIERKICHEL (EGG-COOKIES)

1 - 2/3 cups flour 1 tbsp. oil
 ¼ tsp. salt 2 eggs
 2 tsp. sugar ½ tsp. baking powder

Beat the eggs, the remaining ingredients and knead until smooth. Roll out about one eighth inch thick. Cut in large round or diamond shapes of about three inches on each side. Brush lightly with oil, sprinkle with cinnamon and sugar and prick with a fork. Bake on a well-greased sheet in warm oven (375 degrees) for about half an hour or until light brown.

SWEET AND SOUR TONGUE

1 fresh beef tongue
 1 large onion
 3 tomatos
 1 small lemon, juice
 2 tbsp. honey or syrup
 2 tbsp. sugar
 salt to taste
 1 clove
 small piece of bay leaf
 small clove of garlic
 dash of cinnamon
 3/4 cup raisins
 2 allspice

Cover the tongue with boiling water and parboil for ten minutes. Remove from water and scrape off the tough skin. Slice the onion and the tomatoes and place in a heavy kettle together with tongue and three cups of water. Add the lemon juice and the honey. After the tongue has cooked for an hour, add the sugar, the garlic and the spices. Cook until tender. Remove the tongue from the sauce, pressing through the onion and the tomatoes. Wash the raisins and cook in the sauce until soft. Slice the tongue and return to the raisin sauce. Add sugar or salt if necessary. When ready to serve heat thoroughly.

STUFFED NECK (HELZEL)

2 tbsp. flour
 1 tbsp. matzo meal
 (or bread crumbs)
 1 tsp. farina
 1 tsp. oatmeal
 1 tbsp. chicken fat (or crisco)
 ⅓ stp. salt
 dash of peper and cinnamon
 1 stp. minced onion.

Clean neck thoroughly of all pin feathers. Sew up the wide end. In a small bowl mix together all the dry ingredients, the onion and the seasoning. Rub the fat well into the mixture until it is finely crumbled. Stuff the neck loosely, only about two thirds full, and sew up the narrow end. The helzel may either be cooked in a soup, in a meat stew, in a tsimes or roasted in the oven.

PRUNE AND POTATO TSIMES

3/4 lb. sour prunes
 5 medium potatoes
 1 lb. brisket or plate
 (brut or flanken)
 7 tbsp. flour
 salt to taste
 1 tbsp. fine cut onion
 2 tbsp. syrup or honey
 ⅓ of a cup sugar
 dash of cinnamon

Wash the prunes thoroughly in boiling water. Peel the potatoes, cut them in thick slices and dust lightly with flour. Place the meat in a kettle, cover with a layer of potatoes and then add a layer of prunes. Alternate the potatoes and prunes and finish with a layer of prunes on top. Add the other ingredients, cover with water and cook until the meat is tender and the gravy boiled down considerably. The gravy should be thick and syrupy.

These recipes were submitted by Mrs. Eddy Strull and taken from "The Jewish Home Beautiful". (See review in book section).